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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the value of using children's books to enhance career education and presents sample learning activities for use in presenting career education concepts through children's literature. Career education for first and second graders, which focuses on teaching about jobs, work, the self, and life, is discussed first. Eleven ways in which children's books may function as a medium for providing career education are enumerated. Next, sample learning activities are presented. These activities are structured around six children's books and are designed to help the primary grade students accomplish the following objectives: think about the range of different types of careers available; become familiar with various work settings and occupations (store clerk, doctor, and waiter or waitress); understand that persons of either sex may perform the same job; become familiar with the parts of a newspaper; develop good listening skills; and practice writing skills. Each of these six sample activities contains the following: the author and title of the given children's book, one or more objectives, a list of materials needed, a list of procedures, and one or more subactivities. (MN)

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Using Children's Books to Enhance Career Awareness

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Written words have influenced the attitudes, decisions, and behavior of humankind since the beginning of recorded history. Books influence our lives in subtle and sometimes some not so subtle ways. They play a very important role in the development of our values, attitudes and certainly help to form our foundation of knowledge which we use in our daily lives.

Educators are using books to help children deal with the daily rigors of coping with life through a concept known as "bibliotherapy." 1.

As people became aware that the written word could influence behavior, they began to develop ways to apply this power. During the early 1900's, French psychiatrist Pierre Janet believed that patients could be helped toward a better life through assigned readings. The use of reading material to help solve emotional problems and to promote mental health became known as bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy was used with civilians and military in rehabilitation hospitals, tuberculosis sanatoriums, and in general hospitals during the 1930's and 1940's. It was also used in the military in both World Wars.

Schools have used books and stories as "social helpers" for over a century. 2. Teachers can use this concept of bibliotherapy in their efforts to develop career education activities for their classroom. The "therapy" in the term is used to help children "find out" and "experience" career awareness through books and stories.

Our career education lessons are not aimed at first or second graders making "career choices"; instead, we are trying to teach them about "job", "work", "self", and "life." We want them to learn about the concept of "job" and what it means to have a job. A job for youngsters might be making their bed in the morning.

The second concept is "work." In this view, we are teaching children about work and the advantages to work. We are increasing their knowledge of the work associated with "jobs."

George Maxim tells us, "neither job nor work should be the primary focus of career education." 3. He says that self concept should assume an important focus in career education activities. Each child should be taught that he has the potentialities to achieve more that one occupation or job if he so chooses. Maxim tells us that career education should help to prepare children to choose their life's work when the appropriate time appears in their adult life.

This brings us to the last concept--"life." This concept views career education as the part of the curriculum that is directed toward preparing children for life, that is the different roles a person must play--work, leisure, family, and community.

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The following are some classroom activities that teachers can use in the elementary grades. The goals and purposes of these activities, centered on using children's books to enhance career awareness, are:

The child will:

be better prepared to make everyday life decisions.

learn what it is like to be an adult.

learn the value of work to the individual and to society.

learn the value of being self-sufficient.

learn something about the economic system in which they live.

dream about what they would like to be.

become familiar with five career areas.

become aware of individual responsibility.

build a base for making future career decisions.

be able to identify "tools" used in each of the discussed careers.

be able to work together as a team and in small groups as well as by themselves.

SAMPLE ACTIVITIES USING CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Children's book. OWLIVER by Robert Kraus.

Objective: To stimulate children to think about the many, many different types of available careers.

Materials: Newspapers, magazines, scrap paper, glue, scissors, crayons, pencils, markers, chart paper.

Procedure. Have the children sit in a circle.

Ask questions before reading the story: What kinds of people do you like to pretend to be? What are some of your favorite things to do? etc.

Record all of their answers on chart paper and display them.

Read the book Owliver by Robert Kraus.

Ask children to listen to all the different things Owliver pretends to be. (actor, lawyer, doctor, tap dancer, fireman)

After reading the story, ask the children to tell what Owliver pretended to be and list respnses on the chart.

Ask how he managed to be so many people? (he acted, role played)

Learning Activities

1. Have a box of hats available. Children take turns trying on different hats and acting out what that person would do on their job.

2. After role playing various occupations, remind the children about the book Owliver. Who is the book about? What does it tell us about Owliver?

   Have materials ready so children can make books about themselves and what they would like to be and do. Have charts available with words and occupations for children to use as helpers.

3. For those who don't want to make a book, they may make a collage.

4. Children should be encouraged to share their books or collages with rest of the classmates.

* *

Children's book. Come to Work With Us In A Department Store by Jean and Ned Wilkinson.

Objective: To become familiar with a department store, practice good listening.

Materials: Timecards, newspapers, hangers, storebags, price tags, sales tags, catalogs, play money, pictures of credit cards, checks.

Procedure: Set up table with store bags, sale signs, priced items, store catalogs, pictures of checks and credit cards.

Collect pictures of furniture, bedding, hardware items,

appliances, dishes, towels etc.

Ask the following questions:

Where would all these things be found? (could be found if you wanted to buy them)

What are some names of department stores around here?

Has anyone ever been to any of these stores? What did you see?

Did you or your parent buy anything?

How did you/they pay for the item? Cash, credit card etc.?

How do department stores tell others about their "stuff" they have to sell?

Discuss advertisements. Give newspapers to children.

Read the book Come To Work With Us In A Department Store.

Follow the story with discussion.

Learning Activities

1. Play charades using cards with names of different department store worker.
2. Visit some local department stores
3. Have children design their own department store.
4. Use a worksheet with pictures of things you would find in a department store and circle them.

* *

Children's book. My Doctor by Harlow Rockwell

Objective: Recognize that men and women are doctors.

See doctors as friends that make us well

Identify some "tools" a doctor uses.

Materials: Stethoscope, blood pressure instrument, measuring tape, bathroom scale, eye chart, tongue depressors, small rubber hammer, construction paper, glue, scissors.

Procedure: Set up six stations in the room. Complete by visiting.

a blood pressure station

a height station

a weight station

reflex station

eye sight chart station

heart beat station

After each child is finished all stations, share info on cards that children filled out at stations. (weight, height etc.) Parents help in class might be needed.

Cards should show uniqueness and individuality.

Read the book My Doctor by Harlow Rockwell

List all the different experiences the boy in the story has when he visited the doctor.

Compare his experiences with our experiences at stations.

The boy in the story did not need any medicine. Discuss the use of medicine(drugs)

Talk about the doctor ir the book. The doctor is a woman.

Encourage children to think about careers for all sexes.

Learning Activities

1. Role play situations where children might be encouraged to try "medicine."
2. Visit a hospital or doctors office.
3. Make hand puppets for doctor and have lively discussion.
4. Have children draw as many "tools" a doctor might use.

* *

Children's book. My Dentist by Harlow Rockwell

Objective: to become familiar with good dental habits.

to become familiar with the "tools" a dentist uses.

to practice good listening.

Materials: Pictures of different kinds of food, construction paper, crayons, scissors, glue, yarn, paper punch, magazines, index cards, award sheets.

Procedure: Have children sit in a circle.
Discuss going to the dentist and the names of their dentist.
Discuss the need for dentists and the "tools" he uses.
List and possibly describe the "tools."
Read the book My Dentist by Harlow Rockwell.
Ask children to listen for: girl's favorite part of the visit to the dentist, how the girl felt at the dentist's office, some of the things she experienced at the dentist's office, why it is important to visit the dentist on a regular basis?

Learning Activities

1. Make a list of good dental habits and put on chart paper
2. Construct a book depicting good dental habits from chart.
3. Have children draw their dentist and write caption.
4. Have children cut out pictures of food that are good or bad for your teeth. Use magazines for pictures. Paste pictures that are "good" on one side of construction, and "bad" on other side of paper.

* *

Children's book. Careers in a Restaurant by Mark Lerner.

Objectives: Become familiar with a restaurant and the duties of a waitress or waiter.

Interact in small groups with the other children

Practice additional skills and creative writing skills.

Materials: Paper tablecloths, waitress or waiter order pad, copies of a menu, pencils, papers, juice, cookies, papercups.

Procedure: Put desks together in groups of five and cover with paper tablecloths.

Discuss with children the kind of place this setting reminds them of. What would you do here?

What would people who work here do?

Role play waiter or waitress or both serving juice to customers. Taking order, writing down order etc.

Discuss "tips" and how employees earn a living.

Read book Careers in a Restaurant by Mark Lerner.

Use the pictures in the book to promote discussion.

Discuss the "fast food" restaurant.

Learning Activities

1. Divide the class into groups of two and have them take turns at being waiter or waitress. Pass out menus to customers with simple two and one digit prices. Add bill when meal is complete.

2. Plan a lunch with the class and visit a local restaurant.

3. Do some creative writing: ....the best hamburger ever, or if I owned my restaurant I would serve..... or children may choose their own creative writing story.

* *

Children's book. Come to Work With Us In A Newspaper by Jean and Ned Wilkinson.

Objective: Become familiar with the parts of a newspaper.

Practice writing skills.

Identify things found in a newspaper room

Become familiar with various occupations within a newspaper.

Materials: Newspaper career poster, pile of newspapers mounted on poster board, camera.

Procedure: Discuss receiving the newspaper at home, home delivery.

Identify different sections of the paper

Discuss which sections children enjoy.

Identify information found in different sections.

Pass out papers and cut out five different things found in your paper. Share findings.

Discuss who writes articles, and how they get their information.

Have children "interview" each other to get information;

Intro book and read Come To Work With Us In A Newspaper by Jean and Ned Wilkinson.

Ask children to listen for the many different jobs in the book's story.

Learning Activities

1. Class newspaper. List different jobs of classmembers. Discuss all the responsibilities of the jobs.

   Discuss the interview process and how a newspaper uses it to gain information.

2. Assign artists for the many art tasks needed.

3. Define the editor and his/her duties

4. Try running a weekly class newspaper.

Notes

1. Dreyer, Sharon. The Bookfinder, The American Guidance Service. Circle Pines, Minnesota. 1977. p. IX.

2. Ibid. p.IX

3. Maxim, George. Social Studies and the Elementary School Child. Columbus: Charles E. Merrill Co. Inc. 1983. p.394

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